

PERFECTLY IMPERFECT

Don't judge the taste of your strawberry by how it looks. Strawberries come in different shapes and sizes, and no two berries are exactly the same. Some cultivated varieties can grow to be as big as the palm of your hand. Wild strawberries are tiny – about the size of your fingernail – but they pack incredible sweetness. A strawberry that is smaller than the others or an irregular shape can be just as delicious and packed with as many nutrients and disease-busting antioxidants as ones that are larger or perfectly shaped.

HANDLE WITH CARE

Strawberries are one of the most difficult fruits to ship. Because ripe strawberries are fragile, farmers need to get their berries to customers as quickly as possible with the least amount of damage. Strawberries don't ripen after picking, so farmers need to harvest them when they are ripe and fully red. Because the berries ripen quickly but at different times, farmers pick their strawberry plants every day or every second day. Strawberry picking is hard work; each berry must be picked by hand, keeping the stem intact, and handled carefully to prevent bruising.



THINK BEFORE YOU TOSS IT!

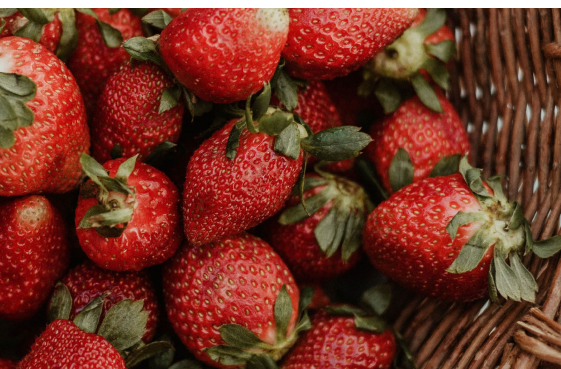
One-third of all food produced around the world is never eaten. This happens all along the food supply chain – from the farmer, the store, the restaurant, and the processor to you. Too much food is thrown away before it even leaves the farm or the store, because it isn't the right ripeness, size, shape, or colour.

When we get our food home, even more of it is tossed out. Canadians waste all types of foods, but the ones we waste the most of are fruits and vegetables.

Throwing away food is a waste of money. It's also a waste of the water, nutrients, and farmer's effort that went into producing it and the energy and expense that went into packaging and then transporting the food.

TOP WAYS YOU CAN REDUCE FOOD WASTE!

1. Eat all shapes and sizes of fruits and veggies.
2. Too ripe? Trim off any bruised or overripe bits.
3. Take only what you'll eat.
4. Keep it cool to keep it fresh for longer.
5. Save it for later – eat those leftovers.
6. Freeze it and use it for smoothies, jam, or cooking.
7. Feed the soil by composting your food scraps.
8. Take a family food waste challenge.



LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITY: MAKING CONNECTIONS

Curriculum Connection: Language Arts - grades 4 to 7: Access information and ideas from a variety of sources and from prior knowledge to build understanding. Use personal experience and knowledge to connect to text and develop understanding of self, community, and the world.

Post this sheet with the front side showing so that students can use the information to further enhance their understanding of themselves and make connections to others and to the world. For example, ask them to think about how reducing food waste can help their school, their community, the global community, and the land. Can they identify how it directly impacts them?

Tell them that farmers minimize waste by handpicking their strawberry crops to reduce damage, harvesting only ripe berries, feeding excess or damaged crops to livestock, and selling overripe berries to be processed into jams, jellies, or sauces. They also use drip irrigation instead of overhead sprinklers to save water. Ask students to think about other ways farmers might minimize waste on the farm. Can they also think of ways that grocery stores can decrease food waste (e.g., reduced pricing, donating food, ordering in appropriate quantities, etc.)?

Have students give their answers by sharing in pairs or small groups, and in personal writing. Sharing ideas orally or through writing encourages understanding of self.

SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY: SCHOOL FOOD WASTE AUDIT

Curriculum Connection: Social Studies - grades 4 to 7: Build inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; communicate findings and decisions. [First Peoples' Principle of Learning:](#) Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Over 60 percent of the food that we throw out could in fact have been eaten.

Most students aren't aware that throwing away part (or all) of their lunches has consequences beyond their parents worrying about whether or not they're getting the nutrients they need. When it comes to food waste, there are many lessons students can learn about the environment, society, the economy, and ethics. Many cultures take food waste seriously. For example, BC's First Peoples believe that every part of a plant picked or animal hunted must be used in some way. They also believe that learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions. Talking about and taking increased responsibility for food waste is a connection to the First Peoples' Principles of Learning.

Using "Think Before You Toss It!" on the student side of this sheet, share the information on food waste. Ask students whether they throw away food and, if so, when and why? Talk with students about where the wasted food will go and why that's harmful; i.e., landfill, greenhouse gas emissions, too much school compost and litter on the school grounds, etc. Then, show them "Top Ways You Can Reduce Food Waste!" and ask them to brainstorm more ideas to add to the list; e.g., ask for a smaller meal portion or ask to pack their own snack or lunch.

MATH QUESTION

Curriculum Connection: Mathematics - grades 4 to 6: Data represented in graphs can be used to show many-to-one correspondence. Grade 7: Data from circle graphs can be used to illustrate proportion and to compare and interpret.

Strawberries grow in many different shapes and sizes. For example, if your class received 185 strawberries today, the breakdown might be:

- 80 round
- 50 bumpy
- 10 long
- 30 short
- 5 tiny
- 10 huge

Have the students create a bar, circle, or picture graph using these sample numbers. When they're finished their graphs, have students express the data as fractions and percentages.

SCIENCE ACTIVITY: A TASTE TEST EXPERIMENT

Curriculum Connection: Science - grades 4 to 6: Questioning and predicting. Demonstrate curiosity and a sense of wonder about the world.

When students have completed the math question, ask them: Why are strawberries different sizes? Let students brainstorm some answers. Then ask the question: Does the size affect the taste? What about the shape? Again, ask students to brainstorm responses. Ask for predictions and then run an experiment. Ask students to write a hypothesis, then have them taste-test their predictions and write up their data and findings. Have students share their results.

Results: Students should realize that ripeness (red from top to tip) impacts taste rather than size or shape.

Get students' families involved: Suggest that students repeat the activity above at home using a variety of fruits, including apples and apricots, and vegetables, such as carrots, potatoes, and peppers.